

SCL NEWSLETTER - #7 - DECEMBER 1990 - Lukas Kendall, RFD 488, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568

You'll notice that this newsletter is only a page--that's because I didn't have enough material to warrant two pages and I wanted to save paper by sticking this on the back of SCORE. Okay, movin' on: **PRINTING SCHEDULE:** I have to wait for agreement from Andy Dursin on this, but I propose that SCORE be typed up the next to last week of the month previous to the month the newsletter is for. Then the SCL newsletter is typed up the last week of the month previous to the due month. So, for reviews and/or news that you'd like to get in the January issues of SCORE and SCL, please send them so that they arrive at the proper time. I'm behind schedule, so please respond promptly. Because of mail lag, this newsletter may go on a six week basis soon--it's almost that bad already. In general, overseas mail seems to take a week, except for Pakistan and South Africa which, for unknown reasons, take anywhere up to three weeks. **MARK HAMILTON'S MOVIE REVIEWS:** See the Questions and Answers section for this. **REVIEWS FOR SCORE:** The many of you who sent in reviews to Andy will notice that they had to be edited--that is not out of malice or "it's your fault, you didn't follow the review requirements", but out of necessity. These newsletters take a while to type up and take up a lot of paper, so to allow equal space for everyone Andy has had to do some editing. With two publications, postage rates are doubled (soon to be tripled), and space has to be maximized since this is coming out of our pockets. So please, try to keep your reviews to a paragraph--a way to do this is to concentrate on facts and main points, without filling the review up with abstract generalizations. It'll be a few issues before everyone gets the hang of it, and until then Andy will have to take out the main points for you. Also, try to review current, reissued, or rare materials (and not stuff like Star Wars--yes, it's a great score, but we all know it), and don't forget the letter grade, which most of you have done well, and remember it must be pretty damn good to warrant that A+. **ADDRESS CHANGES:** In case you didn't notice last newsletter, Mark Hamilton is currently at his college address. Also, I had Francel Díaz Leñero's zip code messed up before--it's 09090, not 109090. **TRIBUTE TO HOWARD:** This will be done in the next newsletter. Send in whatever you have to say.

SCL MEMBERS

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CURRENT SCORES

From the New York Times of December 2nd: (n/a - newspaper advertisement no longer lists, or doesn't list, composer and/or soundtrack label)
Havana-Dave Grusin-GRP, Home Alone-John Williams-CBS, Reversal of Fortune-Mark Isham, Good Fellas-n/a, Look Who's Talking, Too-David Kitay, supervised by Maureen Crowe, Three Men and a Little Lady-James Newton Howard, Mr. and Mrs. Bridge-n/a, Avalon-Randy Newman-Reprise, Hidden Agenda-Stewart Copeland, Diamond's Edge-Trevor Jones, Come to Life-n/a, The Nasty Girl-n/a, Cyrano de Bergerac-n/a, The Grifters-Elmer Bernstein-Varèse, Rocky V-Bill Conti-Bust It/Capitol (music "from and inspired by" the film), Ghost-Maurice Jarre-Varèse, Child's Play 2-n/a, Jacob's Ladder-Maurice Jarre-Varèse, The Rookie-Lennie Niehaus, Dances With Wolves-John Barry-[soundtrack label illegible], Edward Scissorhands-Danny Elfman-MCA, Rescuers Down Under-Bruce Broughton-Walt Disney, Predator 2-Alan Silvestri-Varèse, Vincent and Theo-n/a, Misery-Marc Shaiman-Bay Cities.

SCORE NEWS

Nothing much here. Many long awaited films (and scores) seem to be out--I just saw a television advertisement for The Russia House, for one. Danny Elfman is pairing up with Tim Burton again on Edward Scissorhands, so hopefully we'll get a good score out of him. The TV trailer for Dances With Wolves had some great music. Home Alone is turning out to be a big holiday movie--anyone have any comments on the score? I haven't seen the picture yet. In TV news, it was Jay Chattaway on that ST:TNG episode, Remember Me, and usual ST:TNG composer Dennis McCarthy turned up recently scoring "Parker Lewis Can't Lose" on the Fox network. Also, the music for the new weekend evening show Super Force was done by a "Joel Goldsmith"--any relation to another Goldsmith we all know?

ALBUM NEWS

In album news, Star Trek III was also re-released by GNP Crescendo records here in the U.S., and Star Trek II STILL isn't out yet. Some companies just can't get it together, though they did have the sense to re-release such a neglected score like Star Trek II. Mark Hamilton reports that the Silva Screen Battle Beyond the Stars still isn't out either. Andy Dursin reports that MCA, like Varèse Sarabande, is also not releasing records--just cassettes and CD's. The Russia House is being done in this manner. Andy also reports an interesting new Star Wars title--"John Williams conducts John Williams: The Star Wars Trilogy". It is coming out on Sony Classical, and will feature all new digital recordings of Williams' music, mostly Star Wars, I guess. The orchestra he conducts is the "Skywalker Symphony".

WANTED

Just Looker (Jack Nitzche), V-The Final Battle (Dennis McCarthy), and The Young Guns (?) for Michelle Drayton, and Somewhere In Time (John Barry) for Amer Khalid Zahid. Somewhere In Time is in Movie Boulevard, though the others aren't.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This section is indeed more than temporary. Mark Hamilton continues to be the best source of answers--he had the following to last newsletter's questions:

A: For Amer Khalid Zahid: "Spielberg's next movie going to be an adaptation of Peter Pan to be called Hook with Dustin Hoffman as Hook."
A: For AKZ again: "I think Derran Trax over here released Allen Quartermain and the Lost Cities of Gold, but I don't know which label it's on. It is not by Jerry Goldsmith but does retain the main title which was memorable if I remember."
A: For Michelle Drayton: "Miracle Mile (1989) was directed by a guy called Steve DeJarnatt. It starred Anthony (Top Gun) Edwards. Also co-starring was Denise (ST:TNG) Crosby. The film is about a guy who has just got to first base with a coffee shop waitress when he picks up the phone to hear that the U.S. has just fired a nuke which means the end of the world is just about an hour away. You can probably guess the rest. From what I can remember, the film is a bit artificial and very illogical."

Mark also reports that Alien III has undergone another directorial change, this time from Vincent Ward to rock video director David Fincher. Mark also suggests that he could put out another member publication, similar to SCORE but with movie reviews. If you're interested, send him some movie reviews, I guess for now following the same criteria as SCORE, but Mark will set his own criteria once he gets going, I guess. Also, Francel Díaz Leñero suggests that we could all put together a compilation of all the members' soundtrack lists, and calling it, what else, the soundtrack list. He's already sent me his list. Moving on, there's only one remaining query, from Amer Khalid Zahid:

Q: Has Maurice Jarre's soundtrack for "Omar Mukhtar: Lion of the Desert" ever been released?

The reviews have been coming in fast and furious recently, and I'll have to type some up for the next edition. In the meantime, all the reviews have been terrific, and thanks for sending them in. In case you didn't notice this in the last issue, or in Lukas' latest newsletter, I'd very much like you to follow these guidelines when you send in material:

- 1) THREE OR FOUR SENTENCES. A short paragraph. Everybody should get their fair share of writing space, and in order for this to happen I'd appreciate it if you could keep your reviews on the short side. It'll make it easier for you and me, so we can fit in as much information and reviews in each issue. If you don't, I'll probably have to edit a portion of your review. No big deal, but since I've received numerous reviews of late, there's just no way I can print an entire full-length review in here. So try to keep it short!
- 2) If you're reviewing a certain release, include anything about the release itself--any good linear notes, artwork, track or running time data? Send it with your review.
- 3) Review anything you want. However, reviews of **new** releases are needed and especially welcome. (Re-releases, obviously, fit in that category). In each newsletter, I will note several releases which I'd like for you to review if you happen to own that particular soundtrack.
- 4) Include a grade. (A to F--"A", obviously, is the highest. "F", likewise, is the lowest).

I noted a "Topic of the Month" last issue, so send in ideas. And all comments and suggestions are welcomed and appreciated. This issue was being typed up the weekend of November 16th, so if you sent reviews and they aren't listed here, chances are I didn't receive them until after this issue was published. Happy holidays and see you in 1991!

NEW RELEASES

Lots of new releases were coming out but most of them were not out in the U.S. at presstime. New scores which looked especially good--**Dances with Wolves** (John Barry, Epic/CBS CD and Tape), **Home Alone** (John Williams, CBS CD and Tape), **Predator 2** (Alan Silvestri, Varese Sarabande CD and Tape), **Edward Scissorhands** (Danny Elfman, TBA) and **The Russia House** (Jerry Goldsmith, MCA CDs and Cassettes). All of those scores were set to be released during December, and "Dances With Wolves" should be available by the time you read this. (The others should be out sometime soon)

MEMPHIS BELLE Music by George Fenton. Varese Sarabande CDs and Cassettes. 14 tracks-- 44:15/// One of this Fall's more pleasant film surprises was "Memphis Belle", a predictable but still entertaining film of the WWII bomber plane. George Fenton's fine score is well represented on this fine Varese Sarabande recording, along with three period pieces--two adapted by Fenton, another from an original recording by Benny Goodman. The last track, "Danny Boy", is a 1990s version arranged by Fenton, performed by Mark Williamson with synthesizers buzzing in the background. (This arrangement is fine, but why not include Harry Connick, Jr.'s version, which was actually heard in the movie). Overall, recommended, especially for Fenton fans. **B**

QUIGLEY DOWN UNDER Music by Basil Poledouris. Intrada CDs and Cassettes. 11 tracks-- 40:56// Tom Selleck's western epic ran a mediocre box-office, but Basil Poledouris' fine score will probably become more popular than the film itself over the next few years. This is a western score that's stirring, exciting and also humorous without being overly derivative. The big drawback is that Intrada Records is a small record firm that doesn't reach all areas--if you can't find a copy, order it from a dealer or directly from Intrada themselves at 1488 Vallejo Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94109. A fine score on all counts. **B+**

TOTAL RECALL Music by Jerry Goldsmith. Varese Sarabande CDs and Cassettes. 10 tracks-- 40:13. This Arnold Schwarzenegger bloodfest grossed over \$120 million here in the U.S., and will no doubt clean-up overseas over the next few months. Jerry Goldsmith's score is a mixed bag. The main title sounds a lot like "Explorers" mixed with "Conan the Barbarian", and isn't as good as either. Lots of "Rambo"-like orchestrations here, not the best of Goldsmith's work. **B-**

-Andy Dursin

SOUNDTRACK NEWSFLASH!

Some great old soundtracks are turning up on CD yet again. Varese Sarabande has re-issued both **The Omen** and **The Final Conflict** on CD and cassette, the latter previously available on CD some years back on the Masters Film Music label. Varese has also re-issued **Close Encounters of the Third Kind**, which was on Arista CD a few years ago. (The Varese version contains a disco single of the main title theme, while the old Arista CD dumped it...not that it matters much). Also, Bernard Herrmann's **Taxi Driver** is also newly re-issued from Varese. The small Bay Cities label has re-issued David Shire's **Return to Oz** and John Williams' great score for 1941. "Jaws" fans will have to wait for John Williams' award-winning scores for "Jaws" and "Jaws 2" to turn up on Compact Disc. A Varese representative wrote me back a response saying they would like to release the Williams "Jaws" scores on CD, but can not because MCA Records hasnt discontinued them, and will not for some time. (MCA did delete numerous titles in the past year, all picked up by Sarabande, included among them were four great Jerry Goldsmith titles).

MEMBER REVIEWS

A lot to get through here, so let's dive right in to the mail bag:

Damien:Omen 2 (1978). Composed by Jerry Goldsmith. SilvaScreen Compact Disc(FilmCD 002) Michelle Drayton notes that this score, in her opinion "is the best of the trilogy. His stirring and eerie use of the orchestral strings merged with the spine chilling choral work recurs in various themes throughout the score to produce a truly frightening background as the story unfolds on the screen. The music truly captures the essence of the evil of the Anti-Christ". She also says "the most dramatic piece of music has to be 'Broken Ice'", and in "'I Love You Mark' Goldsmith skillfully translates Damien's confusion and reluctance to accept that his cousin knows him for what he is and that he is a threat". A solid score indeed, and Goldsmith fans should also check out "The Omen" and "The Final Conflict", both re-issued(see above). Thank for the review, Michelle. (No grade given).

Dragonslayer (1981). Composed by Alex North. SC Special Editions Pty Ltd., available in the U.S. from Southern Cross Records CD. 63:30 /// Michael Thompson is absolutely right when he notes that this soundtrack is one "that I've been after but never been able to track down". Michael says that "this is an epic score (with) a majestic sense of wonder, a scope and depth that is stunning and of an immense power". However, he notes that his version contains "tracks on the actual disc(21) and the tracks on the sleeve(22) dont correspond at all..The playing times differ. A little disappointing when the rest (of the album) is so well produced". North's score, a personal favorite of his, was nominated for an Oscar. Michael gives it an A-

Nightbreed (1990). Danny Elfman. MCA Records,CDs and Tapes. 46:46 /// A soundtrack that I rated a B+ last issue is rated by Michael Thompson this time around. "A monster movie with a difference is probably the best way to describe this unique film, as well as the soundtrack. (Although) a couple of 'Batman'-like tracks, overall the soundtrack has a completely different texture than any of the other Elfman scores I've heard. 'Nightbreed' contains a primordial drum beat with a poignant sadness. The effect of which is awesome". Michael also notes that the CD has an extra track, the vocal "Country Skin", which "if you listen to the lyrics they add a nice Clive Barker in-joke to the film. A brilliant film and an equally good soundtrack". Great point Michael, I hadn't thought of that. He gives "Nightbreed" the very top--an A+

Symphonic Suites (1989 compilation). Pino Donaggio. Varese Sarabande CD Club limited-edition. 65:30 /// Michael Thompson notes here that "this is a great collection of Mr.Donaggio's music. Featured here are 'The Howling'(15:11),'Tourist Trap'(21:26),'Piranha'(11:22) and 'Home Movies'(16:24)". He also says that the latter is "my favorite piece. It features swipes of classical music, even down to light opera, sort of everything but the kitchen sink! Great fun". He gives this limited edition an A.

Thanks to Michael and Michelle. Michael also sent in a review for **Bagdad Café**, which he gave a B+. Now, Amer Khalid Zahid sent in a plethora of film reviews--he was the first one to send in material. So here are Amer's (edited) reviews, put together on the next page.

TRIVIA

Q:How many Academy Awards has Jerry Goldsmith won?

ANSWER: Believe it or not, just one. ("The Omen" best original score in 1976).

From AMER KHALID ZAHID.....Amer first reviews **Return of the Jedi**, which he says is "an album that proved to be the biggest disappointment for the fans. The reason being that it's only one LP instead of two. More over, it contains tracks that were not used in the movie, with most of the tracks heavily edited with various additions not heard in the movie". He does say that "Williams has done an incredible job with the music", but says "we deserved more!". A B+ for this John Williams album, out from PolyGram and running 45:36...Ken Thorne's **Superman II** is out, or was out, from Warner Bros. running 40:42. He notes that "the film was marred by the score-John Williams did not return to do the sequel and the chore was handled by Ken Thorne, with tracks from the first movie used with slight variations. (It) lacks the greatness that the original score had" A C+.....**Gremlins**, meanwhile, contains "about 30 minutes of music with 15 divided into music and the rest for rock songs. Jerry Goldsmith's score is interesting. 'The Gizmo Theme' is a small masterpiece". He gives this Geffen release an A-....**Total Recall**, another Goldsmith score reviewed by yours truly on the front page, "isnt a very melodic score, but the rythm is going to blow your brains apart. The score is quite thrilling, with a great use of percussion and string orchestra. At times the score sounds like a blend between 'Rambo' and 'Innerspace'". He, too, gives the album a B-....**Supergirl**, out from Varese Sarabande and running 40:58, is "Jerry Goldsmith's finest! He has rendered a lush, romantic, larger-than-life masterpiece. Selections of the album are quite good but they are edited with slight variations and editions. No Goldsmith fan is complete without this album". He gives it an A+....**Beauty and the Beast** features poetry as well as music from Lee Holdrige and Don Davis. "The main theme is very beautiful and has become a classic". He goes on to say that the album contains other masterpiece: and rates it an A-.

SCORE RATINGS FROM LAST ISSUE AND THIS ISSUE'S SUMMARY

AD-Reviewed by Andy Dursin

Darkman -Elfman B+ (AD)	Georges Delerue:London Sessions 1 -Delerue A (AD)
Explorers -Goldsmith A- (AD)	Arachnophobia -T.Jones A- (AD)
Robocop 2 -Rosenman C- (AD)	Die Hard 2 -Kamen D- (AD)
The Reivers -Williams A+ (AD)	Mountains of the Moon -Small C (AD)
Dick Tracy -Elfman B (AD)	Nightbreed -Elfman B+ (AD) A+ (M.Thompson)
Dead Poets Society -Jarre B- (AD)	The Bear -Sarde A (AD)
Back to the Future 3 -Silvestri A- (AD)	Presumed Innocent -Williams B (AD)
Memphis Belle -Fenton B (AD)	Quigley Down Under -Poledouris B+ (AD)
Total Recall -Goldsmith B- (AD/A.K.Zahid)	Damien:Omen II -Goldsmith (M.Drayton)
Dragonslayer -North A- (M.Thompson)	Symphonic Suites -Donaggio A (M.Thompson)
Jedi -Williams B+ (AK Zahid)	Superman II -Thorne C+ (A.K.Zahid)
Gremlins -Goldsmith A- (A.K.Zahid)	Supergirl -Goldsmith A+ (A.K.Zahid)
Beauty & The Beast -Holdrige A- (A.K.Zahid)	

INFO AND OTHER NOTES

Sorry about the chart mess-up above. I promise you a better looking recap next time. Thanks for the reviews. I did have to edit, but I think (and I hope) that I got the gist of your review in the space provided. For future reference, again, **PLEASE** try to keep your reviews short. This will make everything easier--you wont get upset if your review is severely edited, I can fit more into one space and I dont have to work on cutting down your review. But if you cant do it, so be it.

REVIEWS ON REQUEST: Here are a few soundtracks which I'd especially like for you to review:

WARLOCK(Jerry Goldsmith) **BOYS FROM BRAZIL**(Goldsmith)
FORBIDDEN ZONE(Elfman) **BLUE MAX**(Goldsmith) And Anything Recent!

Amer Khalid Zahid asked me "What would happen if someone reviews a soundtrack that someone else has already reviewed?". My response is--great! That way we can see who likes what, if there's a fervent disagreement and in doing this things get more exciting! Feel free to especially comment on the reviews in this issue. Each month I'll have reactions to other people's reviews, including mine. Lastly, you can review anything you want. However, feel especially free to send in reviews of soundtracks which arent that popular--you dont have to review a "Star Wars" or "Star Trek" or whatever each time, since many folks have already heard them. If there's a "minor" score worth noting that you have, review it! Tell us so we can all check 'em out.

Happy Holidays

ANDY DURSIN, editor.

Andy Dursin